

Maine Wildlife Action Plan Steering Committee
February 5, 2015
0900 - 1230
MDIFW, Augusta

Present: Barry Burgason (MFPC), Judy Camuso (MDIFW), Phillip deMaynadier (MDIFW), Tom Doak (SWOAM), Molly Docherty (MNAP), Emily Norton (MCP), Amanda Shearin (MDIFW), Mark Stadler (MDIFW), Nate Webb (MDIFW).

Phone-in: Sally Stockwell (Maine Audubon), Angela Twitchell (BTLT), Barbara Vickery (TNC), and Jed Wright (USFWS)

Bold = action item

~Minutes of 01/08/2015 Meeting: Deferred so the committee could move directly to review and discuss *A Process for Developing Conservation Actions for Maine's 2015 SWAP* brought forward by MDIFW.

~MDIFW proposal: *A Process for Developing Conservation Actions for Maine's 2015 SWAP* (see attached)

Following the January partner meeting, MDIFW staff met to review the success and accomplishments of the meeting and to consider partner comments and suggestions. Staff concluded that it is difficult for partners to assimilate large amounts of information and then to draw from this information to review and/or develop action plan elements. MDIFW felt the most progress was made when it presented partners with a proposal for their consideration, rather than starting with a blank slate and asking partners to develop an element from the beginning. In response, MDIFW reviewed its current thinking on the process for developing conservation actions (see previous minutes). It decided to prepare a revised process and present it to the steering committee for discussion.

The committee spent two and one-half hours discussing the draft process. During the opening discussion several members voiced concern about the ability of the partners to be actively involved in the development of conservation actions under the process. Mark responded that MDIFW felt that greater progress would be made if the partners had a draft proposal for consideration than if they were asked to start with a blank slate. Several committee members also felt that a proposal for partner consideration would be the most productive. Further discussion followed. Mark asked the committee if there was "modified consensus" to proceed with preparing a list of potential conservation actions for partner consideration. All members present indicated that there was.

Barbara noted that the proposed process did not include a consideration of "big picture" conservation actions, which had been a consideration in earlier discussions. Judy said this was still included in the process and that the actions developed in steps 1A and 1B would serve as a springboard for that discussion.

The following is an outline of that proposal. Committee discussion is recorded under the applicable "steps."

Step 1A: MNAP develop list of conservation actions for habitats / DMR develop list of conservation actions for marine habitats

Jed asked about status of stressor assessment. Amanda said that MDIFW posted it for review last week, but has received little comment to date. He also asked if outside expertise in climate change should be invited to assist with developing habitat actions.

Barbara suggested that steering committee members be able to participate in step 1A, that the development of coastal conservation actions should draw from outside expertise as necessary, and that more representation from the partners should be incorporated in to the development of conservation actions. The members concurred. **Steering Committee** members will provide a list of suggested partner representatives to MDIFW by February 5th.

Molly suggested that professional facilitation of the process to develop habitat conservation actions may be appropriate.

The committee felt that preparation of conservation actions would be best accomplished if the actions were crafted around a goal, clearly articulating their purpose and intent. This led to a discussion of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound) planning and of *The Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation*. The committee concluded that it would be advantageous if all of the individuals preparing conservation actions were working from a common understanding of basic planning and of goals and objectives. **Barbara** has prepared a training seminar, based on the *Open Standards*, for presentation to the committee, MDIFW, MNAP, and DMR. She will provide training to individuals crafting conservation actions for both habitats and species on Thursday, February 12th from 0900 – 1200 at the Arboretum, Augusta.

Note: refer also to Step 1B below.

Step 1B: MDIFW develop list of conservation actions for priority 1 and priority 2 SGCN

Add DMR to Step 1B: MDIFW and DMR develop list of conservation actions...”

The steering committee agreed with the process outlined in 1B – that MDIFW and DMR will develop conservation actions for SGCN and bring them forward for steering committee consideration.

Emily said that they would also like to develop actions for priority 3 marine SGCN. Phillip responded that including P3 species would be a significant departure from the established procedure. Discussion followed. The committee concluded that it would be acceptable to advance “broad” conservation actions for P3 species, e.g., “necessary research.”

Barbara asked what was the criteria and guidance that would be used by those assigning conservation actions to one of the three importance tiers. Phillip said the assignment would be based on the professional judgment of the individual doing the assessment and that purely biological considerations would inform the professional judgment.

Note: refer also to Step 1A above.

Step 2: MDIFW, MNAP, and DMR combine SGCN and habitat conservation actions

Combine steps 2 and 3 into a single step.

Add MNAP and DMR

Move the categorization of conservation actions from step 4, to step 2. MDIFW and the steering committee will place the actions in the appropriate categories.

Step 3: MDIFW, MNAP, DMR, and steering committee review and prioritize SGCN and habitat conservation actions

Add MNAP and DMR

Combine steps 2 and 3 into a single step.

Tom expressed concern that the step 3 deadline was too tight.

What criteria will we use to prioritize conservation actions? Discussion. **Mark** will review the *Best Management Practices for State Wildlife Actions Plans* for guidance and assemble concepts into draft for steering committee consideration.

Step 4: Conservation partners review draft conservation actions and select subset of actions for the 2015 plan [and select a subset of conservation actions to bring forward to the conservation partners]

Move the categorization of conservation actions from step 4, to step 2. MDIFW and the steering committee will place the actions in the appropriate categories.

Send conservation action proposals to partners prior to this meeting, providing them with enough time to assimilate the information.

Meeting format:

--Morning plenary:

Focus Areas

Overview of process to draft conservation actions

1A - habitats

1B - specie

Guidance to break-out groups

--Break-out groups – two separate break-out session: habitats followed by species

Habitats

- coastal / freshwater,
- terrestrial / wetlands,
- freshwater/aquatics marine/freshwater

Species

- birds,
- mammals / reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates
- inland fish and marine

Provide more time in breakouts to discuss conservation actions.

Step 5: MDIFW and steering committee prepares conservation actions for 2015 plan

Step 5: [numbering error in document] Partners review and provide comments to MDIFW list of conservation actions

Begin application of the *Open Standards* to the process earlier than step 5.

Modify 2nd sub-bullet to read "Finalize SMART goals and objectives..."

Step 6: MDIFW reviews and incorporates partner comments

Step 7: MDIFW prepares 1st draft of 2015 action plan

~MDIFW proposal: *Public Outreach Plan Moving Forward* (see attached)

Following the January partner meeting, MDIFW reviewed its outreach and public participation plan (element 8), considering comments and suggestions offered by the partners. MDIFW decided to develop a proposal modifying its plan and to present the proposal to the steering committee.

Amanda presented an overview of what each state is required to accomplish to successfully complete element 8 (*State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program*). Next, she provided a quick comparison of efforts in 2005 and those to date for 2015. Finally, she reported on specific public outreach accomplishments in the preparation of the 2015 plan, listed in several broad categories.

- Presentations and Public/Partner Meetings
- Press Releases / Articles / Social Media / Print
- Email Correspondence
- Peer Review of elements 1-3
- Dedicated 2015 action plan website
 - Draft and final versions of action plan elements
 - Upcoming and past meeting information
 - Contact information

She told the committee that MDIFW will exceed the official requirements for element 8, and that Maine has surpassed the accomplishments attained during preparation of the 2005 plan. Given this, MDIFW proposes to adjust its future outreach and public participation efforts to the following:

- Complete public opinion survey, summer 2015
- Action plan presentations as requested or opportunities arise
- 1st draft of action plan posted on-line for 30-day public comment period
- The public outreach sub-committee will focus on outreach during implementation of the actions plan.

Amanda said that MDIFW is continues to pursue input from Maine's Native American tribes.

Judy told the committee that Sheridan Olden, a member of the Commissioner's Advisory Council, is an invited conservation partner. Judy periodically also provides the Advisory Council with updates on the status of the action plan. The 2015 action plan was also a topic during MDIFW's introduction to the Legislature at the beginning of the current session.

The steering committee supported the proposed modification to the outreach effort. It suggested that additional outreach to the executive committee of the Maine Forest Products Council was important to solicit its input. The committee asked **MDIFW** to notify partners of this change before their next meeting.

~Next conservation partner meeting
March 25-27 possible dates
Location: Augusta area

~Other items: none

~Wrap-up thoughts, suggestions: none

~Next meeting:
Monday, March 9 1300-1700

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